A CORRECTION OF SOME RECENT SYNONYMY IN THE GENUS THECLA.

By Harry Cook,

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Dr. Henry Skinner, of Philadelphia, has lately (Ent. News, Feb., 1907, p. 47), appeared in print with an article noticeable for the strangeness not to say weirdness of the theories advanced. Dr. Skinner, it seems, lately secured some seventy-three specimens of *edwarsi* and *calanus* and, being unable to divide them to his own satisfaction, jumped to the conclusion that they were one and the same species. This conclusion would have been entirely harmless had it not been published. But a printed article bearing such a well-known name as that of Dr. Skinner may lead some astray and so it seems well to call attention to a few facts. In the first place Dr. Skinner divided his specimens on a basis of color, which is no basis at all, unless one has perfectly fresh specimens, as these frail butterflies weather quickly. Of course, this basis gave no results. It could not be expected to. He then considered the extra mesial band on the underside of the primaries which is one of the distinguishing characters, but found "absolutely no differential characters in it." His investigations at this point could hardly have been very thorough for by this band, and its continuation on the secondaries, the two species are with a little practice, readily separated. I have taken as many as one hundred in a day of these little *Theclas* and never found any that could not be easily determined.

It would be well for Dr. Skinner to consider also the larval, pupal and egg stages of these insects before he makes a final determination of the affair. The larvæ he will find quite distinct and, in this locality at least, they feed on wholly different trees. *Edwardsi* eats oak while *calanus* prefers hickory and butternut.

In a footnote on page 45 of the same issue of the News, Dr. Skinner states as his opinion that *Incisalia irus* and *I. henrici* are one and the same. Another extraordinary discovery! The Doctor this time does not enlighten us as to how he came to his conclusions. Probably he did so through a superficial examination of the imagines. I should like to call his attention to the original descriptions of these two butterflies, not to the pictures. If one has a series of the two species.

they can be readily divided by closely following these descriptions. Also an article in the Canadian Entomologist, Vol. XXXVII, No. 6, p. 216, may help to orient one unused to the genus. The larvæ chysalids and eggs of these two species also are very distinct. Of course no one denies that these species are closely allied, as also are *calanus* and *edwardsi*, but their distinctive characters are permanent and stable from generation to generation and appear in all the stages from the egg to the imago. Some of the members of the genus *Thanaos* are much more confusing than the *Theclas* here referred to but their validity as separate species is unquestioned. The true test of the identity of species is found in breeding. Let Dr. Skinner breed a few of these butterflies and then let us hear his conclusions. However he should not despair. I remember distinctly when I, as a boy, was quite convinced that *Argyunis cybele* and *A. atlantis* were identical and that all preceding entomologists were entirely wrong. Such ideas should be kept secret until one has facts wherewith to prove them. Any premature disclosure of one's psychical processes without sufficient facts or adequate logic to substantiate them is unfortunate as it tends to mislead the inexperienced beginners and confuses the literature of the subject.

DESCRIPTION OF A VARIETY OF AUTOMERIS IO, FAB.

By Chas. H. Luther, Jr.,

Providence, R. I.

Automeris io, variety fuscus, new.

Male. Expanse of wing 2″ to 2⅜″. Head, antennæ, thorax, abdomen, legs and ground color of wings a bright yellow. Discal markings on the fore wings in the form of an irregular broken oval with a dot in the center. Large eyes and broad yellow marginal bands on the hind wings.

Female. Expanse of wing 2¾″ to 3⅛″. Head and thorax dark brown. Antennæ, abdomen, legs and under-surface of wings brick color. Markings on the upper surface of fore wings pronounced, the whole having a general rich dark brown effect. Ground color of hind wings, dark yellow with large eyes.

Habitat. — Providence and Cranston, R. I.

Eggs. — First all cream color. At the expiration of two days a blue spot appears at the top of the eggs.

Larva. — First dark brown. Later some are brown and some are green, with the usual *io* markings and spines.